

The **ELI Student Voices**

Spring 2019

Volume 23, Issue 1



UF | English Language Institute
UNIVERSITY *of* FLORIDA

Message from the Editor

Thank you to all who contributed to this edition of the ELI Student Voices. To the students who submitted their writing, thank you for your hard work and for having the courage to allow your work to be read by others. To ELI instructors and staff, thank you for always encouraging and supporting ELI students to develop not only as writers but also as people. To the Student Voices Judges: Camille Armada, Lynne Clark, Tiffany Frison, Mariam Mohamed, Olga Moody, Debbie Sakalla, Victoria Shelly, Alexandra St. Tellien, Jennifer Vann, and Christine Voigt, thank you for your time and consideration in reading the submissions. Finally, to you, the reader, thank you for being a receptive audience. Life is better when you share it with others, so thank you for letting us share our efforts with you.

Editor, Thomas Dolce

Winning Pieces

First Place

“Life is Beautiful” by Kwanyong Ahn

Second Place

“A re you happy?” by Swati Gupta

First Place

Kwanyong Ahn

RW 51

Life is Beautiful

About five years ago, I was a Korean Army ROTC cadet in a college-based, officer commissioning program for military officers. During that time, I was worried about my future, and I did not know what to do. I was confused about who I was and what my purpose was in my life. I needed a new environment to refresh. I decided to quit ROTC and apply to be an ordinary soldier. In my country, all able-bodied men over 19 years old are required to serve in the military for 21-24 months since South and North Korea are in a state of truce. My parents were surprised when I told them about my decision because my grandfather and uncles had fulfilled their military service as an officer. I knew that serving as an officer is sacred and honorable, but I needed a change. I had to make a choice. I took the semester off to go to the military, and this break was the turning point in my life.

I joined the army on April 21st, 2015. It was the first time I ever left my family. It was difficult training under the hot weather. I faced a challenging moment during my third month in the military. One day when I was talking with my father on the phone, he told me that my mother was diagnosed with lung cancer. I tried not to cry while I was on the phone with him, but later he said to me that he knew I was trying to hold back my tears. I was so shocked when he called me that I could not move or walk. My hands were shaking. What? How could this happen to my mother even though she has never once smoked? I was cursing heaven.

Fortunately, she overcame the agony that is cancer and in the end became well again. One day, while she was struggling with this disease, she told me "Life is beautiful, son. It is so grateful. We can see the colors of nature, feel the texture of them, and smell them. I believe the more grateful we are, the more the universe has to offer us. Enjoy your life and be grateful for everything!" My mother was a tough cookie. She was strong enough to overcome her disease with no grudges against anything. Her words turned me into a new person. After that time, I started to be more thankful that I am alive and always try my best at every moment. I do not know what will come, but I want to be open to anything and ready for any circumstance.

To broaden my sights, I planned to travel out of my country. I had been saving more than half of my salary during the 21 months before I was discharged from the army. After leaving the military, I went on a trip by myself. Traveling alone was a thrilling experience for me since I had never traveled alone before. Everything was new to me. I was a man traveling alone and was spending the time to re-evaluate my life. I went to Northern Europe and Eastern Europe. I met many different people and experienced a lot. While I was traveling in Europe, I realized the need to study English to communicate with people from other countries. I decided to go to America to improve my English. That's the reason why I came to the U.S.A. I thought learning a language is learning a culture.

I started to study English at the University of Florida's English Language Institute as an exchange student. Since I have a shy and sensitive personality, I sometimes have a hard time adjusting to new environments. I had trouble making friends at the beginning of the semester. I took more time than many other students when doing homework, which gave me a lot of stress. Those troubles affected my health, and I came down with shingles. I was in the bottomless pit. However, I never gave up. I appreciated the circumstance that I could be here. By the invaluable help from friends who come from various countries, language assistants and teachers, I was motivated to stand up again. At the end of the semester, unlike my first month, my English had improved a lot. Also, my personality and my perspective of life underwent a significant change. I am not the same person who came to America 7 months ago.

I'm here today not only because of my hard work, but also due to enthusiastic supporters that believed in me. My new friends here at the ELI have shown me friendship and helped me to broaden my sights and appreciate diversity. Also, new American friends helped me to adjust to life in this country. The teachers at the ELI have given me knowledge, taught me confidence and courage, not only in English, but in many things. My parents have taught me to love, which has been a central source for me to live my life by, to stand steady, and to allow me to reach this point in my life. To be in this place, at the University of Florida and the ELI. This is not something I paved myself, but something we built together.

The big secret in life is that there is no big secret. We have to appreciate every single day of our lives and try to live every day as if it's our last day. If we spend a large portion of our lives not focusing on gratitude, we can't expect ourselves to change. If we are thankful for what we have, we will end up having more. Everything depends on our minds.

Second Place

Swati Gupta

GM 51

Are you Happy?

When was the last time, any of us had the time or the courage to answer this simple yet complicated question? An 11 letter closed ended question, can make one very uncomfortable or introspect at a deeper level. We have chained ourselves in this self-created web of lies and truth, and with each passing day most of us are trying to get past it. Hardly, any of our actions is in the direction of finding happiness despite the intention and motive of finding eternal bliss. One step leads to another like a robot, making life so monotonous and meaningless at times. The definition of happiness is so poor with so many different meanings, that none of us truly knows what makes us happy. For some it can be professional achievement whereas for some it might be personal but hardly does one get the time for self-reflection and to fathom the mysterious fight between a twisted heart and a logical mind. Behind a smiling face, there might be a grieving and a struggling heart.

We had listened to a TED talk by Shawn Achor, a psychologist, and he talked about definition of happiness. He highlighted the power of surroundings and family on molding the fragile minds of children. Isn't it true that we have been looking at the world through the lens of others and never truly listened to our inner voice? Since childhood, we are made to believe that the mantra of happiness lies in success. But what is success? It is a goal that has no end or limits or a definitive goalpost. The greedy mind craves for more and the bar shifts with a shift in criterion with age, hence making the final objective of happiness unachievable. Shawn in his talk suggested, that instead of following in the footsteps of our previous generations, we should create our own mantra of happiness with reverse psychology.

Let happiness be followed by success. To begin with, maintain a journal and start your day with words of gratitude. One act of kindness which could be small or huge, a word of appreciation or even a plain smile to a stranger, not only will bring a smile on the recipients face but yours too. And I can relate to it because of my personal experiences. There were so many times when I was tensed and sad at work but all that would go away on seeing feeling of contentment and satisfaction on my patient's face. Personal satisfaction leads to positive thinking and one need not to be religious or a genius to understand the underlying simple law of attraction: positivity attracts more positivity. With a feeling of fulfilment and gratification, a happy relaxed mind thinks better, works more and eventually success has to follow.

I lost my grandma recently and one week after this irreplaceable loss, in the midst of my grief, I started thinking. What am I doing? What matters the most to me? Why did life all of a sudden seem so hollow and pointless, when it should not feel that way considering I am where I am meant to be, doing exactly what I am supposed to do and that was following my

professional dream! "It might be a fleeting thought," some said but in my heart I knew that it was not. Losing her awakened me and I realized that I am unhappy! In this mad race of never ending aspirations, I forgot that what makes me happy is my family. I have been following the crowd and will never succeed as a whole until I am happy from inside.

So, don't curb your inner voice because it will guide you towards happiness. And, if you are happy, any kind of success will follow, no matter where you are from and where you are. In this jumbled up world, instead of getting tangled in the insane race and competition between success and happiness, we have to follow the right path to correct ourselves before it's too late and we lose what matters to us the most.

Be kind to yourself and to others. Let's make a happy world.

Carlos E Canela

Grammar for Writing

Living Longer: How to Put the 100TH Candle on the Cake

Many have believed for so long that genes--not those that you and I wear to cover our legs, but those we heard about in our biology class- are responsible for enjoying a pleasurable and a long-lasting life. Others also think that adapting magical plant-based diets and practicing tedious exercise routines every single day until possessing abs of iron would ensure the possibility to surpass the desirable age of 100, or at least close to it. This basic general knowledge is not erroneous at all. Actually, genes and healthy lifestyles do carry weight to live as Robin Williams did in the Bicentennial Man movie. However, the reality is that new studies have revealed that longevity is not only conditioned by nutrition and genetics but also by factors such as social life and level of education and income, which were not taken into account in the past.

Primarily, a proper dietary regimen does play a crucial role in extending the human lifespan. According to Dan Buettner, an explorer of dietary and lifestyle in local human populations, there are five blue zones on Earth, regions where people enjoy surprisingly long average life spans (Cited in McFadden, 2015). The first region on the list is Sardinia, a small Italian island in the Mediterranean concealing exceptional nutrition secrets to live to 100 and beyond. There, Buettner found that a large number of Sardinians include considerable amounts of carbohydrates in their dietary intake and the number of these carbs mainly comes from grains and beans (Cited in McFadden, 2015). What's more, the majority of Sardinians have a plant-based diet as well and eat meat only around five times per month (Cited in McFadden, 2015). Likewise, the distribution of the meals throughout the day goes from huge plates starting in the mornings to tiny or decent amounts of food for dinner (Buettner, 2016). Therefore, this sort of Mediterranean lifestyle centered on beans, restrictions of meat and decreasing meal proportion has been the secret of the Mediterranean island and the reason it is considered a blue zone. Thereby, being somewhat meticulous with what we eat could give the opportunity to be, maybe someday, the new protagonist of the Bicentennial Man film, second part.

Furthermore, genetic information also hides some mysteries to predict how likely we are to overtake the 100th mile. Genes, a stretch of DNA chain, can determine our longevity depending on the type. For example, researchers from the Honolulu Project found that out of 800 sample of genes analyzed, a certain type of gene called FOXO gene is able to double or even triple the likelihood to live to a hundred (Liota, 2011). This particular gene enhances the immune system, repairs tissues and protects cells by creating some antioxidants that slow aging and keep us healthy (Liota, 2011).

However, recent studies suggest that genes represent well under 7 percent of humans' life span, versus the 20 to 30 percent as it was previously thought (Begly, 2018). Thus, we do not have to worry, at least in terms of longevity, about whether or not our genes inherited from parents will allow us to blow out 100 birthday candles someday in the future; if we still have strong lungs.

Another vital factor contributing to lifespan, maybe the most surprising due to its recent discovery, is social life. Based on the study conducted by Susan Pinker, a developmental psychologist and social science columnist for *The Wall Street Journal*, there are two features related to social life -the real life lived outside social media- that are the top predictors to live a durable life (Pinker, 2017). These predictors are the close relationships and social integration. Close relationships are compounded by those individuals with whom we interact the most, including relatives, couple, and close friends. Additionally, social integration, the other predictor and the most influential for longevity, is the ability or custom of socializing with outsiders or other individuals that with whom we regularly interact. Pinker (2017) suggests that, "those two interactions [Close relationships and social integration] are one strongest predictors of how long you'll live." This perfectly explains why Sardinia, where people live in community easing social interaction, is one of the blue zones in the world. While the Bible verse that goes, "love your *neighbor* as yourself..." (Mark 12:31), guarantees to live an *eternal life*, Pinker's suggestion about interacting even with your grumpy *neighbor* and being close to members of your inner circle scientifically ensures living a long-lasting *terrestrial life*.

Finally, the last two factors on the list: level of education and wealth are also in favor of life expectancy. Firstly, education and longevity are positively correlated. Researchers from the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR) points out that, "people who are highly educated live longer on average than people who are less educated." They also affirm that the recent improvement in education system has contributed to the increase of life expectancy in almost all countries. It seems that by increasing the years of education, our lifespan becomes longer. Effectively, the studies prompt that some years of good education provides some help to push our days of life further. Secondly, wealth also has an influence on longevity. For example, scientists express that countries where Gini index, a number that indicates the way in which wealth is distributed among a certain population, is close to zero – when income is fairly shared among citizens- possess high rate of life expectancy at birth and vice versa. Therefore, it is crucial that policy makers and governments set laws that provide access to a good education and a correct wealth distribution in accordance with the performance of each citizen.

In conclusion, long life span is mainly conferred to those who: adapt proper dietary regimens, enjoy of magical genes, spend time socializing, have the access to education, and live in non-corrupt countries. Even though genetics is a factor that could dictate life span, the lifestyle factor accounts for over 90 percent of the pie chart. So, every time when putting on your favorite "*blue jeans*", remember that it is not necessary either to come from a *blue* zone or to have inherited magical *genes* in order to surpass the day in which you put the 100th candle on the pie. Likewise, you do not have to be science fiction robot as the Bicentennial Man. By just adapting the proper habits and diet is more than enough. To sum up, express your love to your dear ones, say hi to your neighbors, complete that career you are passionate about and enjoy your delicious homemade beans.

Bandar Almalki

RW 51

Euphoria

Have you ever felt euphoria? You may be euphoric when your favorite team is win. That emotion come from when you feel extreme happy. I'm feeling that first time when I met my daughter. I never feeling that euphoria naturally. However, I miss great moment and feeling. Especially when I she was first child. I miss her around five months after I left my country and I start learning English with ELI. Actually, I have seen a lot of picture and video for her since she was born.

Today, my euphoric, motivation and passion when I see my daughter. Even though I came late to class morning or I back tired, once I saw her and start crawling around me, I forget that long day. Literally, I spend all day with her. She began to discover the word and she start said baba. She is my queen and she my euphoria.

Zolima Ramos

Reading and Writing 62

Follow your heart and be grateful

Since I was a child, I always felt a curiosity to explore the world through my eyes, and also an enormous conviction to follow my heart. I remember when I was 16 years old. I was an inexperienced teenager with a strong desire to conquer my deepest dreams. At that time, as a high school senior, I had not decided a career path because of my father. He always wanted my sister and I to become lawyers like him, but inside my heart, I always knew what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. After many months of not knowing what to do, I decided to study law in order to make my father proud of me. After one semester of studying law, I realized that I had committed a terrible mistake. I was confused and sad because I didn't want to disappoint to my dad, but also I was aware that my happiness, fulfillment and peace of mind were crucial and fundamental in order to make the decision of dropping out law school and following my dreams. I really didn't want to study something that doesn't fill my heart and expectations. I always wanted to follow my passion and achieve my dreams, and becoming a lawyer wasn't one of my dreams. So, after days of thinking, I took a deep breath and began to talk with my father about the situation. I was very nervous, but fortunately my dad was open to hear me. I started explaining the reasons that I had about my decision of dropping out law school. He was so kind and finally accepted my decision. My father really appreciated the honesty of my words and valued the importance of being faithful of what you truly want to achieve in life. I got to recognize that if it weren't that experience I would never have remembered how important is to follow your heart, especially in the moment of making important decisions. Currently, I'm happy and grateful with the career that I chose. Remember never forget to follow your heart and be brave to speak your truth.

Leman Guner

GM 1

April 23rd

I loved reading poetry in my elementary school years. The teacher asked me to read a poem on a national holiday of Turkey for the whole school. So I ran to the podium with enthusiasm.

Children's Day is April 23rd. For the celebration of Children's Day, we gathered in the school yard and made a line. First the teacher made a speech about the meaning of the day. Then she announced my name. I ran to the podium. With my lush voice, I said, "April 23rd," the name of the poem.

What? I didn't remember the rest. I looked at the teacher's face. If she whispers the words, they will come to my mind. The teacher only smiled. I yelled again "April 23rd!" I could not remember anything. I pushed myself to remember. But the excitement of the poem flew. I said "April 23rd" once again. When I couldn't remember the rest, I bowed my head and stood there. Tears slipped from my eyes in despair. The teacher came to me in a hurry.

"Don't worry, Leman! You may have forgotten. We all know how beautiful you read poetry. Today is your celebration!" She stroked my head. The teacher read the poem and I calmed down. After this, every time I am in front of the audience, I have a piece of paper.

Luis Espinoza Garcia

RW 20

A Wild Bat Day

I found a savage bat inside in my house on December 19, 2010, and it wasn't fun. When I saw it first, it was faint and intact. I didn't know how it came inside of my house because I didn't see anything fly into my house. Bats can be rage, and they can bite anything for defending. Therefore,

my family was afraid and sad at the same time. My parents called emergency before the bat woke up. Then I put the bat in the small box and took out to the ground. It tried to fly inside of the box and made a lot of noise as a result. My family and I waited until the bat calmed down all night so we could free it out. Finally, we let the bat outside, but we didn't feel safe. I was startled that day because I thought the bat was a danger for people. Nothing happened, but I didn't enjoy the experience.

Dina Valencia

Reading and Writing 42

A Bicycle Life Lesson

Bicycling can be exciting or boring depending on the person. There are people that love traveling on a bike because for them it is relaxing, peaceful, and a good sport. There are also people that hate traveling on a bike because it is hard, boring, or they had an accident. Now I want to tell you my history of traveling on a bicycle what I learned, why it marked my life and why I do not hate or love to ride a bicycle.

20 years ago, I had an accident on a bike my father gave me a new bike and the same day my father's wife's nephew, Daniel, came to visit us. I was excited to use my new bike and Daniel said to me that we can ride the bike together. So, I trusted him because he was older than me. Then we rode the bike together in the same bike with me on the handlebars and for the next five blocks a dog followed us and Daniel kept ahead of the dog because he was faster than we fell on to some sand. When I saw my leg it was cut open approximately 30 cm in the shape of an L and deep. After that, my father took me to a hospital in a town called Jamundi in the city of Cali in my country Colombia, but there were not enough tools there to do my surgery. So, they sent me to Cali and they couldn't help me by my type of insurance, again they sent me to another hospital in the city. Finally in that hospital I had surgery that lasted six hours and I was hospitalized for six days. So, you can imagine my father's scolding. There I learned that a bicycle is for riding a person not two and never again did this in my life.

So, this marked my life obviously because of the scar that I have on my body. And also to pay attention to our parents because before I left the house my father told me that I could to play, ride bicycle but with a specific purpose in mind that should not be changed and that's what happened. We invented a game that marked my life I cannot walk for one month and I did not go to study for two months. Nowadays, I am an adult and I can say that never again in my life I went back to using a bicycle for two people. I use it as it is normal for a person and if we are two people I prefer to walk.

Nowadays I don't love or hate to ride bike. For me is transportation or sport equipment, I use a bike sometimes when it is necessary go to a place. However I don't hate to ride a bike because of what happened and I cannot say that I love to ride a bike, I prefer to do another sport like playing soccer, riding roller skates or swimming.

Finally, this accident is something that I will not forget because I learned that parents have more experience in everything and always they want the best for you. I also learned not to ignore the rules, there are things that were created with a specific purpose. Every time I look at the scar on my leg I think that every decision in life brings good or bad consequences and can mark your life. Otherwise I learned that in spite of the problems or circumstances you should never hate something that you looked for or touched you, but neither love something that caused you harm so, you should always look for a balance in everything and never repeat the same mistakes again.

Leoreannis De Ornelas

LS 1

Hello! My name is Leoreannis De Ornelas. I'm from Venezuela from the small city of Puerto Ordaz. I'm 17 years old. I'm very sad because i'm here alone. I want to be a dentist, and I want to have a consulting room for that. I love my family, and I love my free time with my brother. My brother's name is Leornaldo, and he is my only brother. He has a beautiful personality. He is lovely. He is a good person, but he is always sleepy working for my father. He is young, and he is the best friend of my mom. He is nice. He

understands when there is a problem. He is always ready for anything. He always comes to work and has a good responsibility. He is a good brother and an excellent person. Because is my brother, i feel really lucky. I miss him.

I remember a good vacation with him. When i was with my small family, something very special happened to me. One day, I was in Miami with my brother playing soccer. When my dad arrived with some tickets to the Bahamas, I didn't expect such a nice surprise. Then my brother and I stopped playing because the tickets were for the next day. We prepared all the luggage because we wanted to enjoy the best vacation.

Caoshan Piao

RW 42

One thing I learned from my friend

I want to share with you a friend I met during my ELI study. Of course, many friends have given me a lot of help, but I still want to talk about this special friend for me. Even though it is a common story, it is special to me. She is a very lovely and kind girl. During my study in ELI, she has helped me a lot to integrate better.

Actually, I am really talkative. But when I came to America, my English was not good. I could not talk to people so I became very quiet and talked very little. God knows I wanted to communicate. Even in class I did not understand anything. When the teacher asked me questions, I could not understand anything, even a very simple question. It made me depressed. I got a master's degree from a top university in China. If I knew that one day I would come to America, I would have not chosen Chinese – Korean translation as my major. I would definitely have chosen English as my major. By coincidence, when I started studying at the ELI, there is a project to give a conversation partner to help you adapt to America life. I thought it was helpful. I applied to it and got my conversation partner – Caitlin.

One day last year, we met at Library West. It was hard for me the first time. I could feel that she was a very good person. But I could not understand anything that she was saying. Our conversation was always that she asked questions and I answered. Basically, I only said “yes, yes”. I showed her every word I said before I translated it with a translation app.

When we met for the second time, things began to change. She made a study plan for me based on my situation and I followed it. Slowly, I could understand a little bit when the teacher would talk about something in class. We have met once a week since last October. She helped me a lot. She listened to me patiently and corrected my grammar problems. Whether in study or in daily life, she surprises me a lot. I learned a lot from her not only for studies, but also in understanding America culture better.

Thankfully, I am becoming more positive. Although, my English is still not good, I use a positive attitude to deal with it and study and live hard. Because of my conversation partner, I once again realize the importance of kindness. I realized that when I am around positive energy I also became more positive, facing the challenges of life better.

JiunHsien Chiu

RW 20

The Difference Between Taiwan and the United States in Education

I've been studying in the United States for two months, and I found something difference between Taiwan and the United States in education. *American* society is *more diverse* than any other countries, and students can study more effectively adjust to learn what they want. In my country, when we finish school, we don't go home. We go to the institutions to study more because Taiwan's education just cares about students' grades. On the other hand, in the US, everyone wants to join some activists after school. I think studying diversity is very helpful for students' future. For example, some students might not be good at studying, but they could be great painters. Finding their own expertise is very important. Learning independently is also important rather than being a mama's boy. Most of Taiwanese parents are quite strict, and they control their children too much. Most students don't have freedom to try new things although they get into their universities. For example, many Taiwanese students start their first dating in university. Another example is that some dorms turn off the internet service after 12 am because some parents don't want their kids to play games all night. However, in the US, children are taught at an early age to be independent. I feel fascinated by these different cultures whether they are right or wrong. It makes me to have more international view.

Betty Giraldo-Berrio

Reading and Writing 53

After I graduated from high school in Colombia, I had the option to apply for a scholarship to study Modern Languages at a university in Russia, the former Soviet Union. I was 18 years old. At that time, I thought this idea was only a dream. My sister applied twice and failed. She wanted to study Medicine. When I received approval confirmation, I couldn't believe it! My mother did not want to give me permission to go out of the country, but definitely I was decided, even against my mother's will. "I am 18 years old, I will stand for my rights," I thought. Though my parents did not have much money, they supported my decision by buying stuff to take with me. It was a hard decision for them to allow their younger daughter to move to the other side of the earth, with unknown people, and completely different culture, food, habits, language, severe climate changes, as well as Socialism.

I initially wanted to study Modern Languages, but as soon as arrived, I was forced to change objectives. This is the reason why I subsequently became a Russian Language Philologist, a highly demanding discipline. After six months, lack of financial sources and austere living conditions fueled some students to surrender and return back home. The transition to living in the former Soviet Union was hard for all new students. Hard times at 1982s for the rest of the people: dying socialism, cold war, arms race. Despite the difficulties, I endured during this long period of time as a persistent student. I did not lose personal stability which certainly contributed to peak success in 1988 when finally, I obtained my Master's Degree of Arts of Philology, Teacher on Russian Language and Literature. Furthermore, I obtained the title of Russian-Spanish, Spanish-Russian Translator and Interpreter. At the graduation ceremony I was surprised. I did not know that my thesis was nominated for a contest among hundreds of students. I won the first place and was awarded with a Red Diploma and Medal for Merit.

It makes sense dream! Let dreams be your wings and fly!

The sky is the limit for our dreams, and dreams come true!

Kaushik Ragam

Reading and Writing 53

A small snowball starts rolling downhill, collects more snow on the way, grows into a humongous snowball and there you have it, A massive snowball ploughing into our protagonist or antagonist. Life often mirrors that, a small snowball figuratively is a small decision that is seemingly innocent, one small argument somewhere and this just snowballs into a massive life decision.

Parents and kids have arguments all the time, It gets worse when kids hit their teen years, hormones raging, identity issues all over the place in a society where education is more of a status symbol than anything else. This is the small snowball.

This snowball becomes a medium sized snowball when the child grows up and graduates from college and as luck would have it, the world is plunged into economic chaos due to the worst recession since the 1930s. He or she confronts their parents but now the snowball is out of control only made worse due to the horrible employment market.

What is a young unemployed adult inaccurately blaming his parents to do then? The most predictable path for any young adult is that he or she hates everything and everyone, that is the cue for the individual to escape that reality. The young adult in a fit of rage quits on everyone whom he loves and everyone who loves him. This is when you see the snowball grow to a larger size.

By the time the young adult comes of the age that he or she is to be a parent and parental decisions make sense, the snowball is out of control and is humongous and parents and the estranged child now cannot come close despite wanting to, their worlds are too far apart. This snowball story is not uncommon nor unfamiliar and in an internationally renowned school like the University Of Florida, ELI, there are different snowballs prancing the halls, the 18 year old hotshot small snowball who wants to make it big in the U.S. and has wide eyed dreams of becoming a computer engineer or a animatronics engineer, the 25 year old medium sized snowball who is at the midway range towards realizing his or her professional dreams, the 30 year old professional who is just gotten to where he needs to and now that like the puppy that runs after a car, has the car but starts to think, "Is it worth it all ? I wonder how my parents are doing?"

Wesam Alshahrani

Grammar for Writing

Sleep, Dreams and Nightmares

It seems that “a dream has come true”, and one of the most mysterious events in human history has been discovered recently. For centuries, dreams have been one of the greatest mysteries of human kind. Philosophy, science, and even religions have been trying to understand the way that dreams are formed in the mind, and the purpose of them. In fact, many people may believe that the exciting or scary images they usually see in their dreams are a sort of warning messages from their brain. A great number of studies have tried to discover the mechanism and the functions of dreams and nightmares in order to answer two main questions: what are dreams and nightmares? And why do people have any of them?

What recent studies have found is that dreams and nightmares are the gate of the conscious. Scientists have been trying to discover a valid method to examine dreams, but the problem is the best way to examine dreams is to wake the person, and ask him/her about his/her dreams. As such, scientists have tried to use technology for that purpose. Technology has helped to identify the dreams' process and stages, and showed that dreams happen in both REM and non-REM sleep. According to (Walcutt, 2018) sleep has five stages: stage one is the non-REM light sleep, stage two and three is light sleep, stage four is deep sleep, then the last stage is REM sleep. After these five stages, a person would have a short wake up, then start a new cycle. Every cycle takes almost 90 minutes. During the non-REM sleep, people usually have positive emotions and thoughts. On the other hand, they have negative thoughts and feelings during the REM sleep. For that reason, researchers think the depressed people usually have longer REM sleep (Walcutt, 2018). But why do people dream? And what is the bond between dreams and consciousness?

These questions were answered in 2017, when a team of scientists from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the US found the parts of the brain which are responsible for dreams. The new discovery changed the old beliefs that linked dreams and rapid eye-movement (REM), and proved that dreams could also happen during non-REM sleep. Moreover, the new discovery found that dreams' images, thoughts, and feelings usually came from parts of the brain that did the same tasks when the person is conscious. As an illustration, had the person dreamt about faces, then the region of the brain that is responsible for face recognition would have been active. This result proved not only that dreams were real and they happened during sleep, but also the similarities between the dreaming brain and the conscious brain (Davis, 2017).

Besides the pleasant and enjoyable dreams that can make people happy, nightmares can be a part of the sleep experience. Dark places, ghosts, and horrible falls, that is what most of the people describe a nightmare, but researchers define them differently. Natalie Angier, a science writer for the New York Times, tried to explain the differences between bad dreams and nightmares in her book: “Dreamscape of Nightmares, Clues to Why We Dream at All.” In a radio interview, Angier said that 75% of people's dreams are bad or negative ones. She has defined nightmares as the dreams that scare you and make you wake up. She stated that even though people may not remember them, they have nightmares at least once a month. Despite the fact that finding an accurate way to explain dreams and night dreams is almost impossible, Angier thought that the explanation of dreams should be related to cultural aspects. For example, in Arabic cultural, dreaming of rain usually means that there will be good news soon.

As you can imagine, children suffer from nightmares more than adults. According to Angier, starting from the age of five, children start having dreams once a week. Fortunately, that number decreases by the years. Based on Angier, by the age of fifty-five, most people will have stopped having bad dreams. Moreover, David Foulkes, whose research interests focus on children dreams, believes that young children usually dream less than adults, and they cannot describe their dreams due to their lack of ability to understand, recall, and explain those dreams by words. He also has classified them, based on the type of dreams they can see, into three categories. The first one is children from two to five, who cannot dream because their brains cannot imagine moving images like adults. The second category is children from five to seven,

who can see moving and interactive characters in their dreams, yet they cannot make a solid story by them. In contrast, the third category of children, around the age of seven, can create both the interactive characters, and the narratives that are coherent, longer, and full of emotions and expressions. The David Foulkes's study results showed that dreams are related to the child's brain development, especially visual imagination development (Nir & Tononi, 2010). However, the New York Times writer said that studying dreams and nightmares is quite difficult since the people seem to stop dreaming when they are in the sleep labs.

Knowing the hidden messages in dreams and nightmares has been a controversial topic among scientists. Some of them think that dreams and nightmares reflected our thoughts and fears, and some of them believe that they can be linked to the brain functions. A new hypothesis suggests that they might be a simulator which prepares people to face their real life. That hypothesis became very popular lately since a Finnish scientist, Dr. Revonsuo, had suggested it. The scientist believes that nightmares are important for human existence. He thinks that bad dreams are biological programmed to the brain in order to help us survive. As an illustration, the scary events that happen during a nightmare aim to improve a person's ability to deal and bear the bad situation that he/she might run a cross in everyday life (Coville, 2009).

Another suggestion of the purpose of dreams and nightmares is related to the brain's ability to learn and remember. Researchers have studied the impact of sleep on memory before and after learning situations. Dr. Stickgold, who has studied the role of sleep in learning and memory for many years, believes that having good sleep after learning a new skill could expand a person's ability to recall and perform that skill. Even though the mechanism itself is not clear yet, sleep helps the brain to consolidate any new information, and stores it as a stable memory; then, opens an access to it, so the brain can recall that information, whether consciously or unconsciously, any time (Stickgold, 2017).

In the depth of my heart, I wish dreams were a signal of something important. I wish they answered some questions or gave me a hint that could make my life easier. However, science says that dreams and nightmares are related to the human brain and survival. These results will help the scientists to highlight the changing that could happen in the brain during sleeping, and if the dreams are the way that the brain uses to communicate. In addition, the results may encourage other researchers to start looking differently while they are doing related studies, so they can "go beyond their wildest dreams" and find more interesting outcomes about brains and dreams.

References:

Coville, C. (Producer). (2009). *What are Dreams?*[Video file]. United States. Retrieved February 13, 2019, from <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/what-are-dreams>

Davis, N. (2017, April 10). Scientists identify parts of brain involved in dreaming. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/apr/10/scientists-identify-parts-of-brain-involved-in-dreaming>.

Nir, Y., & Tononi, G. (2010). Dreaming and the brain: from phenomenology to neurophysiology. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 14(2), 88-100.

Ahmed Hamdi

GM 1

U.S. Dream

Who was thinking Ahmed will travel to the US?! No one was thinking that from my family. When I was studying at Gazan University in Saudi Arabia, my professor said, "You are a good student. After you graduate from Gazan University, try to complete your master's." What the professor said was a starting point for me. I studied hard at the same university to get the opportunity to complete my

graduate study in the U.S. After graduation, I applied with my CV to the same university, but they rejected me because there was no available position for me. I felt destroyed for two years, sitting and crying at home. My mother just prayed for me. Eventually, after Mom prayed, and another university called me and the professor said, "Please, we need you." Suddenly I was crying from happiness. I couldn't believe it. It was amazing. I did all requirements to complete the admission for the University of Florida. I am in the U.S. especially in Gainesville. This story was written in my GM 1 ELI class. I will do my best to complete this story. Thank you.

Seungbum Han

R/W level 50

Celebration speech

Hello.

I'm Han Seung Bum.

First of all, I'm honored to have given you the opportunity to speak at such a place.

I would like to thank the administrators of the kind ELI and Office Staff, and thank the teachers who taught me English professionally, L.A. and my precious friends.

What are the chances that we will meet in the United States, Florida, UF, and ELI? It's probably a much lower probability of winning the lottery. So, what is the probability that we will meet again after today?! Maybe it's up to us here. There are so many people here I really want to meet again.

When I first came to the United States, I was very strange about culture, language and people, but now I was able to learn American culture and other cultures, learn English, and make friends from various countries through UF's ELI. And thanks to the care and blessings of many people here, my baby Arim with a meaning of beautiful forest was born healthy. Perhaps the best thing in my life was to have my child born. I want to share with you the idea of looking at my baby like that. There's a story I want to tell not only my child, but also to everyone here.

You are loved, you are precious, you are beautiful, you are talented, you are capable, you are deserving of respect, you are one in seven billion, and most of all, you are good enough.

Saad Alqahtani

LS 1

Hello, everyone! My name is Saad Alqahtani. I am from Saudi Arabia. I was born in Abha City. I am married, and I have two children. Also I come from a big family. I have 4 brothers and 9 sisters. I like football. I like to eat kabsah. I want to learn English because I want study engineering in U.F. I have a story. One day I went to Walmart with my son, Saud. When I was shopping, Saud got many things and put in my cart. Finally when I went to cashier, I was shocked when I saw the cart. I told the cashier these things not for me.

KeumDal Jung

RW 21

Visit Korea

Nowadays so many people are interested in Korea. So if you come to Korea, I recommend you visit just 3 places. First, you have to visit Seoul, the capital of Korea. There is harmony between buildings and traditional construction. If you want to go shopping, you should go to Dongdaemoon. There are so many Korean clothes. Next, if you want to heal your mind, you will go to Jeju Island. That place is a healing spot in Korea. Jeju has special food. or you can see female divers. Taking a walk on the beach and enjoying the view at the cafe is one of the best ways. Last, if you want to combine beaches and city, it is also good to go to Busan. There are a lot of high buildings and many beaches. We calling that city, Busan, the second capital in Korea. You can try to eat fresh seafood. Among them Jagalchi Market has one of the best markets in Busan. There is much seafood caught in a day, so you can eat cheaper that way as well. If you visit Korea, I recommend these top three famous cities. I wish they will be a great memory for you.

Manuel Diaz

RW 21

My Wonderful Father

My dad is the best person who exists in all the world. We share a lot of time together. When I was living in my country, we used to ride horses on a beautiful mountain that is near my house. I love to hear his history, the stories about his life. I am preparing for the future with him because I am going to take care of my dad's company in Venezuela. I really recommend you to enjoy the time that you have with your parents because you don't know how long you will be able to enjoy them.

Saad Alqahtani

GM 1

A Beautiful Day

Last Saturday I and my family went hiking. We saw crocodiles. I felt happy, and my children were scared. During the walk, we got tired of walking. The golf cart took us and helped us complete the hike. Then we took a short break and drank coffee. It was a beautiful day.

Meshari Alsuwaidan

RW 20

The Worst Day

I had the worst day of my life when I was 5 years old. It was the day when I saw my mom and grandmother crying. I didn't understand that my country had a problem with our neighbor Iraq! It was a scary day. Soldiers were arresting men, women, and children. We were not allowed to play outside anymore. We rushed to the supermarket to buy milk for my youngest brother. The shelves were nearly empty, and people were panicking everywhere. It was a fear-full day. Many houses were destroyed. Black dark clouds were starting to appear in the sky. It was the result of the ignition of oil wells. It was a noisy day. The sound of guns and airplane bombs are still in my head. I hope all wars are stopped, and everyone lives in peace.

Fahad Alsubaie

RW 20

ELI

ELI is the best English school for international students. There are many useful activities for students, so they can practice. ELI activities are fun, so many students have motivation to speak more in English. Also, you can make a lot of friends. There are many excellent teachers at the ELI. Many teachers are very patient. They explain well, so many students can understand better. The location is convenient. The bus stops are next to the school. There are a lot of restaurants, cafes, and supermarkets. I am happy because I study at this school.

Shih-Yu Hsu

RW 10

Chiayi

I'm going to introduce my favorite place, Chiayi, which is in Southern Taiwan. The shape of old Chiayi town looks pretty much like a peach. Because of that, people gave it a nickname, Peach City. One of my favorite places in Chiayi is Southern Branch of the National Palace Museum. The museum consists of permanent exhibition and temporary exhibition sections about Asian history & Chiayi's local food, such as turkey rice beef soup and Plum wine. I miss Chiayi.

Taer Jaara

LS 1

My name is Taer. I am from Jordan. I was born in Amman, the capital of Jordan. I am married, and I have five children. Their names are Adam, Jad, Rahma, Sama, and Maria. I have two brothers and three sisters, and they are teachers. I am an accountant. I graduated from AlZaitona University in 2002. I have been working for Advanced Technology company from 2006 until now. Before that, I was a teacher for two years, and I taught Accounting. My favorite hobby is swimming because after swimming I feel better and relaxed all day.

I moved to the United States in 2017. I am new to the language and want to learn English, which is an international language. Because I use English for my job, I came to the University of Florida to enroll in the ELI.

Finally, I will tell you my story about dogs. I didn't like them. One day I went to my neighbor's house. He has a huge dog. When I entered his house, the dog ran toward me very quickly. So I ran away, but it was still following me. I went to hide in my car. My neighbor explained, "My dog is friendly! He wants to play with you." I told him, "No, thanks. Sorry, I don't like dogs." Then he brought the dog to the backyard. That is when I finally entered his house. A week later I went back to visit my neighbor. When I was sitting, the dog came and started sniffing me. My neighbor told me, "You can pet him." So when I started petting him, he became friendly. From that day on, I started liking dogs.

Talal Aldhafeeri

My Classes

I have a nice Grammar class. The atmosphere is cool in class. I have a nice teacher, and she has a beautiful face. She is a smart woman, and her name is Debbie. I have the best friend. He is smart, and he is from Saudi Arabia. He likes to play volleyball. I have beautiful classmates because they are smart and friendly. They are from different countries. I have a nice friend, Ahmad. He is a good friend, and he is from Saudi Arabia. My classmate, Saad, is from Saudi Arabia. He is smart. Ignacio is from Spain, and he likes football. Alexander is from Peru. He likes to play football. I have a beautiful class.

Valentina Oropeza

Reading and Writing 53

Why Personal Relationships End

We meet many people during our lives. Some of these people are still part of it, and some people aren't. But the question is; why do these relationships end? There are some reasons why. For example, when the people grow up, the way how they think starts to change. As a result, different interests in life come. Also, the college life can make it difficult to maintain old friendships or romantic relationships. On the other hand, some people start experiencing troubles with their relationships because of differences in thinking. As a consequence, people can move away from our lives for many reasons.

We all remember that friend who we spent our childhood with, but that now, is not involved in our lives. For children, it is much easier to keep a friendship than for adults, and this is because children are just looking for having fun at the moment. But when they grow up, those children start to find different interests in life. These new interests can separate the relationship of two young friends. For example, one child can join the school's soccer team, but the other one can join the mathematics club. At the end, the most probable thing is to take different ways in life for them.

Also, college is a very common reason of why relationships end. When the people move to a different place to study in the university, they are also leaving their daily connection with friends and family. As a consequence, it is difficult to keep that close relation with all of their friends. In addition, in college people often meet new people and start to make relationships with people that surround them. It is true that the communication can still occur, but not as often as before. It can be hard to not have that strong connection with old friends, but it helps you to grow up as a person and try to know new people. It does not mean that you have to end the relationship, but a good step is to not depend on an old relationship.

Next, romantic relationships can be the hardest one to end. In fact, these kinds of relationships can end for many reasons. One of them is the differences between the couple. At the beginning of the relationship, everything looks perfect, but then the things can turn a little gray when people start to know each other deeply. As a consequence, they find that their partner is not as perfect as they believed. A second reason can be the location. If one of them is moving to another place, it will be more difficult to keep the relationship. Even so, strong romantic relationships can move on despite those problems.

In conclusion, many people come and go out of our lives. There are many situations and even behaviors that make people take different ways. Nevertheless, this is something that has to happen. The people that should stay in your life today are going to be there, no matter what. Finally, being thankful of the people that surround you today is the best way to appreciate them.

Sarah Albrahimi

RW 21

The Best Day in My Life

My life is full of many days and events. Some days will be happy, full of good and joy that will bring joy to my heart, and remain firmly in the heart forever. The memories of the happy days remain present in the heart and spirit. My happiest day is the day of my graduation from each stage of study. It is a day full of mixed feelings that can not be explained or separated. Despite the great joy of success and graduation, my heart feels for a moment the great

emptiness that will surround it after the farewell of the friends of study, and at the same time, the joy remains the master of the situation. There is no greater joy than the joy of graduation. No matter how many happy days in my life there is no nicer than the day I get the fruits of fatigue and diligence. Success in study is the basis of the future, the key to life, something we are entitled to be proud of, because it is an achievement for ourselves, the realization of many dreams and aspirations, and the transition from one stage to another. Because it is a happy day, I must see the expressions of joy and pleasure on the faces of all my friends and family who come to congratulate me on success. But that joy on the faces of my parents is the most beautiful and most expensive at the life.

Abdulrahman Alrazqi

RW 21

The First Day in the ELI

When I came to ELI, I thought English is too hard for me. But when I met my teachers, I felt comfortable because all of my teachers always understood me. They are helping me to understand, listen, speak, read, and write. They gave me many tips how can I learn about English an easy way. They are so nice people before I imagined. I'm lucky to be here in ELI.

Hesham Ghnaim

RW 21

Wonderful Experience

That day, we had a wonderful experience with the CIP. Initially, I went to Bush Gardens in Tampa with ELI friends. We went to ride the rollercoaster, "Sheikra." But we had to wait 30 minutes because that rollercoaster is very popular. When we got on the rollercoaster, our heart was pumping too fast. At the top of the rail, when I saw the bottom, I didn't see the rail. We felt shocked because "Sheikra" is very fast and dangerous for children. After the rollercoaster ride, we were excited. We took off on another rollercoaster. Our legs were shaking. We felt a headache during that day. This day was thrilling, and it was absolutely awesome!

Hsin-Lun Sung

RW 21

My Life Change

My life has wonderfully changed. When I was in my country, I did not do any housework. But now I want to do everything. I wash clothes and clean house by myself. I want to buy any house items like cleaning supplies, food, and bedding. Last week I learned how to assemble an electric fan, and how to change lightbulbs. These things in my country I never did, but now I want to know how to do. I came to the United States two months ago, and now I can cook two food dishes. I am very excited that I can cook and learn more things before I go back to my country. My family knows these things and are very proud of me because I change a lot. These changes made me grow up and become stronger. I believe these changes can made me a better person.

Nora Almassad

RW 42

Your friends are awesome , people need to interact with other people . In life you can make a friend to help you. A few close friends are some one you rely on and can trust , a close friend is a special person you can share every thing with together and make a lot of things together. In fact, close friends do anything to make your happy. You can tell them about your life or problems, you can bring some gifts and have a lot of fun.

First, with a few close friends you never have to worry about your problems. With close friends you can be yourself, you do not need to be fake. In addition, close friends can help you and fix your problems, they may go to great lengths for you. Whereas, with many friends you can not tell them about your private life. No one can have many friends and they all know about their problems or life.

Second, when you comeback from a vacation absolutely you thought about your close friends, what he would like for you to bring for him. In birthday party of your close friend you do not worry because you know what your close friend wants, it is easy to give your close friend expensive gift. On the other hand, you can not give a many friends expensive gifts or bring some unique gifts. Also, you can not know what all your friends want to need gifts for their birthday party.

Third, with close friends you can make a lot of fun together. No one can understand your joke or some word except your close friends. And you can easily make plans to shopping or plan to go to the cinema. In contrast, many friends can not go to the mall together because you are too many, they cause a nuisance in the fun not all your friends agree for your plan, due to everyone having different plan from your plan.

Finally, a friends are a wonderful thing, but they are many differences between a few close friends and many friends. A few close friends are better than many friends. In fact, you can tell a few close friends about your problems, bring expensive gifts and you can have a lot of fun together. Friend are always there in difficult times and care for each other.

Mayela Carrillo

Happiness depends on you

“Happiness is that feeling that comes over you when you know life is good and you can’t help but smile”. In my own opinion if you have peace inside you are happy; I always had thought that you are the owner of your destiny and also of your happiness, because happiness is a decision or a lifestyle. In addition there is more than one reason to be happy. Some of these important reasons are to be alive and wake up every single day, breathe pure air, look at something different like nature or a sunset, enjoy delicious dishes, learn something new and thousands other of things to be happy.

In my case one incomparable reason to be happy is my family. They are everything to me. They motivate me to be a better person, to be brave, to be the best version of me and also their play a fundamental role in my life and for this reason I spent a lot of quality time with them. I appreciate and I keep inside every special moment with them. My mom, my dad and also my sister obviously have a different personalities but it is interesting learning about the best of them.

Secondly, something that makes me happy is “food”. I love to cook also I see that aspect in my life like an art. Basically I can make a different recipe and I like to share with others whenever I can. I think that food is a miracle, a gift and a blessing because not at all people have access or just the opportunity to go to a good restaurant or maybe to eat whatever they want. So when I can I love to go a new places to enjoy new dishes or simply to try to cook something new. People that know me, like my close friends, know that I love to cook. Besides I like to eat and this makes me happy.

Thirdly when I do volunteer work or maybe when I support others I feel useful especially in a difficult moments. I think that life is not easy sometimes and I know that is a question of perspective but most of the time it is kind of difficult to get the good, especially when people have a lot of problems. In my experience I like talking with people as it is a good way to understand them and to study their behavior or to be positive about them.

In conclusion I think that life is short and not everything is perfect, sometimes there are difficult situations or hard moments but my dad always says, “If there is a problem and you have a solution that is not a problem anymore, but if there is a problem and you don’t have a solution that isn’t your problem. So we need to learn to enjoy life because it is the most perfect gift. Life is special it is a miracle, “happiness depends only on each of us as happiness is in your hands and each day is a new opportunity to start over and be happy and don’t forget while there is life, there is hope”.

Alexander Arevalo

GM 1

Manchas

Manchas was part of my family. He is a cocker spaniel who was by my side for 15 years. I was 6 years old when he was born. It was a very special day, and he is a very special dog. I taught him how to drive a motorcycle. We went everywhere together. I remember when I saved him from acid 3 times from being poisoned. At age 15, we had to operate. He did not resist the operation, and he died. I am sure that Manchas was the happiest dog in the world.

Alexander Arevalo

GM 1

Introduction

My name is Alexander Arevalo. I am from Perú, originally from Pucallpa City. I am 26 years old. I have 3 brothers and 1 sister. My mom is Peruvian, and my father is Mexican. I really like driving motorcycles in competitions or in my free time. Also I like to travel, and go out with my friends. I have 2 best friends, Franko and Juan. I consider myself a positive and sociable person. The last 6 years I was living in Argentina where I worked and studied Architecture.

Ahmed Hamdi

LS 1

Ahmed's Life

Hello! My name is Ahmed Hamdi. The meaning of my name is "Thanksgiving to God." I am from Saudi Arabia which located in the Middle East. I was born in Abha City in 1993. I would like to tell you about my family. My father served in the army, but he retired. My mother is a homemaker, and she does not work outside the house. I have four brothers and three sisters.

There is a short story that reminds me of my family. Ten years ago, we went to picnic by the sea, and we played football. It was a fun day, but something unexpected happened. My father gave me the key to our car to keep with me. I soon forgot about the key when I went swimming with the key in the pocket of my shorts. After two hours my father asks me, "Where is the key?" I lost it in the sea. My father was so angry. He yelled at me. Finally, the problem was ended by one call to the car company that brought a new key.

Now, I am in U.S. to study English at the Eli, and I want to complete my studies in Chemical Engineering which is my dream. Thank you for reading my story.

Ana Casella Azocar

LS 1

Ana's Self-Introduction

My name is Ana, and I want to tell you about my life. I'm from Venezuela, I was born in Ciudad, Bolívar, a small town but with beautiful people. I was born on October 29th in 2001. My family is small and wonderful. We always support each other, and to us the most important thing is real love. I want to be a Graphic Designer, and my dream job is design for digital marketing. I also have a story to share about the worst day of my life.

The worst day of my life was when I left my country and my family to come to study English in Gainesville, Florida. This is my first time in this city. The first day I didn't really like this place because it was so cold. I hate the cold, so I really wanted to go back to Venezuela. I really missed all my family, my dad, my mom, my little sister, my cousins and my friends, but I thought about my future because I know that learning English will open many doors and opportunities in my life. So I think that I have the responsibility and motivation to do it. Now I'm really happy and comfortable living with my sister and knowing that my family is happy for me. I'm so lucky to have them.

Jeongyeon Kim

RW 21

Hi. My name is Jeongyeon Kim. I'm ELI student and my LS level is 30. The reason why I came to ELI is because I want to study with native speakers. I could study English in Korea, but I thought if I study with native speakers., I could learn more and faster than studying in Korea. I was worried because it was my first time to came to the U.S, but everyone was so kind that I adapted well now. The choice of ELI was a great choice, and I would like to recommend it to others. Thanks for reading.

Ignacio Milam Abaga

LS 1

Hi, my name is Ignacio and I'm from Equatorial Guinea and Spain. I have grown up in a big city, Malabo. I was always with my cousins playing a lot of games and having fun.

In my free time, I always play soccer with my friends because we love this sport. Also I like to listen to music because I love to dance, too, especially Afrobeat and American songs. I listen to Chris Brown, Migos and others...

Finally, my dream job is be a big politician like my grandfather who is an example for me since I was child. So I have a short story to tell when I was a child. One day when I was having dinner with my grandfather, he told me that I have to be a politician, and I have to be better than him. I said him that I will do it.

That is why I'm in the ELI to improve my English and after that apply to the University of Florida or another university in the USA to study political science.

Obaid Alenezi

RW 20

My Trip to the USA from Kuwait

My trip to the USA from Kuwait was difficult. First, my family and I were sad because I had to leave them. I didn't show my feeling because I didn't want to see my mom worried about me. My family made big lunch and dinner for me before my trip. There were many different dishes, but I couldn't enjoy them. After dinner, my sister told me that they will miss me. After all that, I packed my bags. My friends were waiting for me outside. The last moment was very hard because I saw my mother crying. That was very painful. Secondly, I was in the car with my friends, but my brothers couldn't see me. This is another reason why that moment wasn't easy. Then we went to the airport. I checked in my bags and finished everything before I was in the plane. While I was checking a ticket, my friends were waiting for me to take pictures. Next, I got in the plane. The trip wasn't short because it took 16 hours to get to the USA. I couldn't sleep because I was thinking about my family. Who is going to take care of my job? Who can help my father and mother? I could not have peace in my mind. Finally, I arrived the beautiful country USA, and my brother was waiting me there. Now, I'm missing my country especially my family.

Leman Guner

GM 1

Mardin, Turkey

I went to Mardin in November 2018 with my brother. Luckily, I have a great friend who lives in Mardin and knows the area well. It has great, old stone buildings from historic times and delicious local food. I really enjoy, am fascinated by, and adore buildings, especially schools, from the Ottoman Empire. We visited these places: the stone city, churches, madrasahs, and Dara City from the Roman Empire. The location of the city was amazing. My friend took us to taste some local dishes. We tried dishes such as flat bread, maldum and stuffed rice. I still savor them! Mardin is my favorite ancient city.

Maria Villa Rojas

LS 1

Ultimate Frisbee—Bazinga vs Bum

Bazinga vs Bum was one of the best matches I had. The Ultimate Frisbee game was in February of this year. The match was us against one master team, Bum. All were between 30 and 40 years old. This meant that they had more many years of experience. The match started very normal. But by the end of halftime, they were winning. This made us improve to win the match with a three point lead and the pass to quarter finals. This was one match to learn and grow from as a team.

Maria Villa Rojas

GM 1

My Niece

The day my niece was born was very beautiful. My family was so happy. She is always a cute gift. She was born at 1:00 am on June 20 at the Mederic Clinic in Bogota. This day I had many emotions because I was going to be an aunt. I went to the clinic with my parents. When I saw the baby, I had no words. She was perfect. When I cuddled her in my arms, I could only see her holding her own hands. I waited for when she slept. My family was in the clinic until the baby could go home with her parents. This day is one of my favorite days of my life.

Roy Roca Vaca

RW 21

My New Experiences in Gainesville

Since I arrived in Gainesville, I learned more about life. Firstly, the decision to move to Gainesville was not easy for me. Because my father forced myself to study here, but in time I liked living here. I have many experiences. For example, in Bolivia I never cooked, always people cooking for me. However, this was a big problem for me. But my friends taught me, and I saw many videos about cooking, and today I prepare good food after many bad experiences in the kitchen. The life in Gainesville is very different than my hometown. At the beginning, it was difficult for me. Because when I arrived in Gainesville, I did not understand English. But at the ELI I learned a lot in little time. I am grateful for my father forcing me to study here and allowing me to live these amazing experiences in Gainesville.

Saud Bin Rimal

GM 1

Dubai Airport

I came to America. When I was at the Dubai airport at the gate of my flight number 12. I was heading to Florida. My father called me and said, "Check your gate!" I waited for the reception staff at the counter for a long time. When they arrived, there were only 20 minutes left. I gave him my ticket. When he saw it, he said, "We are sorry to give you a wrong gate number. This is the gate of Hong Kong, and the number of the gate of my flight is 2. He told me to go quickly. When I finally got there, the staff was ready to let the passengers to get on. If I had not called my dad, the flight would have left me.

Saud Bin Rimal

LS 1

Myself

Hello, everyone. My name is Saud Bin Rimal. I'm 17 years old. I'm a student at the ELI at UF. My nickname is Professor. I'm from Saudi Arabia, and live in the city of Hail, which is located in the north of Saudi Arabia. I will tell you a short story about my friend, Talal. I met him on March 2nd at my friend's house. Talal is older than me, and he is my friend in all classes and outside the Institute. Our thoughts are very close or the same. Our friendship is permanent and will last forever.

Talal Aldhfeeri

RW 20

My Reading & Writing class

I have a nice Reading and Writing class. The atmosphere is cool in class. I have a nice teacher. She has a beautiful face, and she is a smart woman. Her name is Zoe Witty. I also have beautiful classmates. They are from different countries. They are smart and friendly. I have the best friend. His name is Meshal, and he is from Saudi Arabia. He is my nice friend because he has a good and beautiful heart. He likes to play volleyball with me. Also, Fahad, Meshari, and Bader are smart, and they love to play football. I am happy because I have a beautiful class.

Fiona Poggi

LS 1

Hello everyone! My name is Fiona. I am 17 years old. I am from a small city called Portoviejo in Ecuador, but I was born in Rochester, Minnesota. I have two little brothers, two diabolic brothers. But this is okay because I like them very much, and I really love my parents. My mom is a very friendly person, and my father is the most amazing person in the world in my personal opinion.

My hobbies are playing the piano and reading, but in my free time I love to write a story. My dream is to publish a book with me as the writer.

I have a story to share. Almost two years ago, my cousin was born. I was really excited, I said to myself: "I'm going to say cousin" But in the moment to saw that gender to that baby I remember star crying because that baby is a girl. I don't need a girl, I really angry. But with she born and I see I love, I feel really happy; she is very beautiful and she is My baby cousin. In actually my cousin have a tree years ago, she is a most beautiful child, she is my world.

Thank you for you attention.

Ebed Abreu Suarez

RW 20 C-term

Two Different Cultures

It isn't a secret that there are many cultures in ELI, and I think this is one of the best things about coming to study here. The most visible cultures are Arabic culture and Latin American culture. Between these two cultures, there are many differences, and one of these is the food. The Arabic culture has the spiciest food that I've never eaten before, but I'm not saying that the Arabic food isn't delicious. In Latin America, we have a longest list of food. Some of these dishes are spicy, and some are sweet, greasy, and bitter. The language is another thing we have a big difference. Some Arabic people say that the Latin American people speak too fast, and the Latin American people say the opposite. The typical dress is so different, too. The Arabic people use Keffiyeh, and this cloth represents the proud of their culture. In contrast, the Latin people don't have a typical dress. These two cultures have many differences between them. However, they are so rich, and we have to respect the differences.

Kurt Bruckner Suarez

RW 21

My Family

My family is very important and special to me because they always help me in all moments of my life. My family always supports me, and each one has taught me different things. My father taught me to never give up and follow my dreams. My mother taught me that love for the family can be all, never lose faith and fight for what you want. My big brother taught to respect my family and everything I have, and he was my first best friend. I don't have words for all gave me because without my family, I am nothing. I can only say thank you for everything. The family is always first. Never forget your family.

Talal Aldahafeeri

LS 1

Hi! My name is Talal Aldahafeeri. I'm from Saudi Arabia from Hafr al Baten City. Hafr al Baten is near Kuwait. My family is my father and mother. His name is Meshal, and he is a teacher. My brother's name is Faris, and he is 6 years old. I like sports. I like to play football, and I like to play volleyball. I also like to play soccer. My favorite food is kabsah. We have different kabsah. Kabsah is made with camel, kabsah of sheep, and kabsah of chicken. My dream job is to be a doctor. I study math in my country. I am here to study English as the language of the world.

I tell you a short story. I had an accident when I was walking along the street with my cousin. I crossed the street at this moment. I did not notice the cars. I was hit by a car. Then I went to the hospital. I broke the bones of my legs and arms, so then I did not cross the street.

Meshal Alqahtani

RW 20 C-term

My Favorite Gift

My favorite gift is a horse. My father gave me this gift when I was a child. When I was a child, I saw a lot of horses, and I liked them so much. After my father gave me a horse as a gift, I slept with my horse for many days, and I played with him every day in the morning and at night. I raised him every single day, and it became big. However, after six years, he died, and I was very sad for a month. After I felt better, I got maybe five horses in the years, but I didn't feel good because these horses were not like my horse. Then my father gave me another gift, and it was a small horse I liked so much. This horse was my child, but now I didn't see him anymore because I left to the U.S. I hope I can find the same horse in the U.S.

Alexander Arevalo

RW 10

Reading & Writing Class 10/20

The "Reading & Writing" class is essential to learn to speak English. My teacher is Zoe Witty. She is very happy. There are 14 students from different countries: two Taiwanese people, three Venezuelans, one Colombian, eight Arabians, and me Peruvian. My classmates are very funny. The "Reading & Writing" class are 5 days a week, and each class lasts 2 hours very productive. The teacher Zoe *forbids food and drink in the classroom*. We all want to learn, and Zoe teaches us to respect the time of others and to be punctual. We are all very happy!

Ana Casella**RW 20*****My Country***

Venezuela is a beautiful country. There are many places to visit such as Gran Sabana and Los Roques. These are tourist places. Also, there is a very famous church that is in Maracaibo, Venezuela. Many people go there to spend some time praying with their family and take pictures with the virtue that they have. There is delicious food. There are many typical foods like Arepas, Cachapas, and Pabellon criollo. People eat Arepas in the morning with cheese and ham. We eat Cachapas in the morning and at night and Pabellon criollo at lunch. The happiness of Venezuelan people despite the bad situation is another reason. Right now, Venezuela is going through a very strong and bad situation because of the president of Venezuela. Many people are dying because they do not have any food or medicines in the country. This month, Venezuela passed 4 days without any electricity, and a lot of children, old people, and adolescents died. The hospitals do not receive any people. Many desperate people start to get in and steal food in the supermarkets. In conclusion, Venezuela is a beautiful country with wonderful people, a lot of famous places, and delicious food although Venezuela is going through a bad situation because of the president.

Badr Aldahlawi**RW 20*****Last Trip to London***

My last trip to London was a wonderful trip. The first time, I went to the mall. When I was there, I bought shoes and a Jacket. After that, I went to a restaurant to eat pasta with my family. The next day, we went to Bournemouth on foot. There were a lot of activities. For example, there were people dancing and doing some competitions. When we got to Bournemouth, we felt so tired, so we went to the hotel to take a break. After that, we went an Italian restaurant to eat food because we were so hungry. When we finished, we went to the beach for fun. There, I swam and played volleyball. After that, we came back to our hotel. My trip was a good trip, and I hope to do it again someday.

Saud Bin Rimal**RW 10*****Skydiving***

A parachute jump is a great adventure and a risk to the soul at the same time. My trip to skydiving was a coincidence, and I never thought I would think about it. My cousin called me and said, "Do you want to go to the parachute jump with us? We want to jump. Do you want to jump with us?" I agreed to go with them but did not agree to the jump. After we went there, we did everything we needed to go down. The distance from the sky to the ground was approximately 7 kilos. They jumped and felt scared because they had never tried it before. Their descent took 8 minutes. When they came down, they rejoiced to reach the earth safely and happiness filled their faces. In the end, the trip was unique and very distinctive.

Maria Villa Rojas**RW 20*****Alaska***

Alaska is my pet, Alaska is a small and cute dog. Her breed is Pomerania, but I think she has several breeds. She has white brown color spots. She is 7 years old, and she is a good dog. She is always in my bed when I study or do anything. When she sees people who are sad, she makes them feel better. She loves going to the park for playing whit her ball. She has a lot of energy and runs very fast. She is like my sister, but she is sometimes very nervous. We believe the first owner mistreated her, and she was convulsed. Now, she is the best dog, and I will never leave her.

PO Box 117051
223 Matherly Hall
Gainesville, FL 32611-7051, USA
Phone: (352) 392-2070
Fax: (352) 392-3744



StudyEnglish@eli.ufl.edu
www.eli.ufl.edu
www.facebook.com/UFLELI
www.instagram.com/UFLELI
www.twitter.com/UFLELI